

# AMERICAN ART IN VARIOUS ASPECTS

## The Montross Collection And Some Other Exhibits

By Royal Cortissoz

A collection formed by a dealer is commonly expected to be very miscellaneous in character, to contain "something to suit all tastes." But the collection formed by Mr. N. E. Montross, which has been placed on view at the American Art Galleries and is to be sold at the Plaza next Thursday, has about it not a trace of the commercial tradition just mentioned. It is a body of three score and ten American pictures expressive of nothing more nor less than an enlightened interest in our school. The standard it illustrates is one sympathetic to good painting. And the ensemble admirably enforces the point that good painting, in the American school, is usually synonymous with an original point of view.

The landscape men more particularly in evidence are Tryon, Murphy and Hassam. There are a dozen examples of D. W. Tryon on the walls, and though his later manner is well represented the special interest of the group lies in its reflection of the earlier phases of his style. The influence of his French training is obvious in the older canvases, in the free, broad definition of forms and in the pervasive gray light. But even while he was in harmony with his Parisian masters he was developing a quality of his own, a quality both of color and of atmosphere, and especially he was finding out and interpreting with great truth the special note of the American countryside. Nothing could be more direct, more racy, than such pictures as the "Apple Blossom Time" or the water color of "A New England Pasture." In imaginative sensitiveness this group of Mr. Tryon's pictures might be said to culminate in the beautiful "Autumn Twilight," dating from 1911, but neither in design nor in charm of landscape sentiment does this surpass the larger painting, "Landscape near the River," done in 1887. It is catalogued as one of his "very important works," and the phrase is just. In pictorial unity and distinction he has never done anything finer. Very quiet, even subdued in tone, this is in essence one of the most brilliant things in American landscape. Mr. Murphy's six examples include a couple of early crisp water colors that have technical adroitness, chiefly, to commend them, but the oils are works in the later manner which has won him his reputation. It is the manner of an artist for whom pigment has taken on, of itself, a certain poetic charm. In the "Sunlit Stubble," the "Golden Afternoon," and most of all perhaps in the "Old House," the rich impasto yields an effect like that of dusky ivory. He is faithful to his landscape motive, conveying, for example, in the "Upland and Valley" a peculiarly vivid impression of observed facts, but all through this quartet we are conscious of nothing so much as of beauty of painted surface.

Mr. Hassam's traits are shown at diverse angles, he, too, being represented by works of widely different dates. The sparkling study of shipping, "The Italian Bark, Gloucester," carries us as far back as 1896. In this, and in the opalescent "Frenchman's Bay, Mt. Desert," he was developing his impressionism in a very light, blond key. In other pictures he is anything more luminous, but the web of tone is more complicated and richer. Witness the delightful "Water Garden" of 1909, packed with flowers, by the way, but generalized into a winning simplicity. There is a quaint note in the Hassam group, "The Butterfly," but his strength is best manifested in the landscapes, in the "October's Gold," with its plangent color, or in the dainty little memorandum of "News Depot, Cos Cob." By the late Robert C. Minor, in whom the solemn music of the Barbizon movement reverberated, there is a noble "Sunset," and the best tradition of our older school is brought back in two landscapes of no great



BREATH OF AUTUMN  
(From the painting by Arthur B. Davies, in the Montross collection)

spiritual mystery and enchantment it is brimming over with his peculiar romanticism. The three companions of this work remind us of the curious breadth of his scope. One of them is the familiar "White Horse," an illustration of his faculty for lifting the portrayal of an animal to a higher power through sheer force of personality. Another is the picture, obscure save as it is illuminated by poetic emotion, called "Landscape With Old Mill in Moonlight." The third is his "Child Harold's Pilgrimage," a little landscape

as lyrical and limpid as a Corot, with a horseman who seems to bear an immeasurable burden of old, unhappy, far off things and battles long ago. The Ryders are all true fragments of his odd genius. Mr. Davies, who sometimes seems a kind of offshoot from Ryder, has eight pictures in the show. His tendency, always, is to be uneven, and there are some of these examples of his art which seem to want his accustomed glamour. The "Body of Dew," for instance, is a fairly crude performance. But he is bewitchingly himself in "The Call of Spring," or the "Breath of Autumn," or the "Forest's Festival," which is to say that he revives in these paintings all the naive charm, as of old Renaissance improvisations, which was once his salient gift. He has lately fallen upon fantastic ideas of modernism, which appear to have withdrawn him from the artless spirit of his early pastorals. It is hard to see how he could have left these ideals of his earlier experience. Take, in illustration, the "Breath

of Autumn." In a way it is of realism all compact. The woman rambling beneath ancient trees, the child on his pony at her side, make no specifically romantic appeal. Yet the scene is drenched in romance, in the romance of youth and a remote sylvan world. There is one undiluted realist in Mr. Montross's company, Mr. Horatio Walker, with a big, powerful picture, the "Ploughing in Acadia," and several smaller studies of rustic themes, "Milking," "A Steeple-Feeding Pigs," and the like. The large canvas aforesaid asserts itself through weight of composition, through a certain robust quality, but the other compositions exemplify the value of technique in its more intimately appealing quality. That is what marks the collection as a whole. From Murphy's delicately sensuous tonality to the bravura of Chase's "Fish With Still Life" the prevailing strain in this exhibition is one of interesting craftsmanship. It is representative of much that is best in the American school.

## Random Impressions In Current Exhibitions

There are certain artists—Michael Angelo is their supreme prototype—to whom form supplies an idiom through which to express emotion. Their pursuit of beauty does not necessarily take account of subject in the strict sense. They use form rather as the writer of absolute music uses the notes of the scale. No other type, pressing toward success, courts graver dangers. Some five years ago when Mr. Kenneth Hayes Miller asserted himself in a fairly ambitious group of pictures he seemed on the way to triumph in this field. Out of a kind of gray penumbra his figures suggested visions which had earlier recalled Arthur B. Davies, but which now promised the revelation of Mr. Miller's own inspiration. We were impressed by his ability and wondered just whither he was tending. To-day, at the Montross gallery, he shows us.

A few of his canvases revive the old penumbra, but in the main he uses another and lighter key, seeks to make more of landscape sentiment, and in so far as he hints of any external influences makes us think of such diverse painters as Cézanne, Renoir and Puvion. His art has gained. There is in it more of the light and air of

vision—a cosmos in which beauty is not forgotten, but somehow it is not brought convincingly to the surface. The same preoccupation, the existence of which we suspect, is probably accountable for Mr. Miller's arbitrary definition of ground forms and his indeterminate textures. His landscapes suggest rather than report, and that may be on occasion a virtue, but these pictures do not suggest enough. He makes us feel, as we have felt before, that he has a rare imaginative emotion of his own. But also he still leaves us feeling that he is moving about in a world unrealized, that he has not yet found the right envelope for the rich substance of his art.

Mr. Jerome Myers, at the Milch gallery, knows pretty clearly where he is going. Subject, in his case, shows vividly through the fabric of his art. It is the East Side that he portrays—the life of the streets, of recreation parks, of the humbler theatres—and through most of his scenes the children of the tenements provide the compelling motive. The stuff of his work is human or nothing. As such it goes perilously near the edge of anecdote.

When he paints "The Grandmother" or "Evening Circle" or "Recreation Park" he might easily be confused with the illustrator in black and white, avid of "types" and local color, and thinking only of the accurate presentation of a slice of the New York scene. But Mr. Myers does much more than this. He has a gamut of color that is very personal, notable especially for some quiet tawny notes that hark back in their realistic way to Whistler, and even more personal is his style. This is what gives him his distinction, the fresh, intimate and likable way in which he draws his threadbare models, young and old, giving their squalid figures a new and charming investiture of art. He is weak in design, perhaps from uncertainty as to what to omit. When he paints a street procession it is his canvas rather than the street which is crowded. Even in the smaller groups his actors are not quite spontaneously—or artfully—enough placed. The naturalness of pose is felt in the particular woman or child rather than in the group. On the other hand, the naturalness which he seeks Mr. Myers finds. His portraits of the East Side would be hard to match and harder to beat. Such sentiment as is embodied in them is refreshingly sincere. There is the beauty of truth in these pictures and there is unusual beauty of one. Beauty of design added to their character and strength would give them even higher rank than they now deserve—and that is not low.

Nothing in an artist's work as it appears from year to year in local galleries is more inspiring than a definite sign of progress, of craftsmanship brought under firmer and more fruitful control. This is the mark of the exhibition of water colors which Mr. William Jean Beaulieu is making at the Reinhardt gallery. He is far and away stronger than he was in his last show, hardly more than a year ago. A well considered case. The moment he swerves from it he loses. There are certain pictures here, like the "Forty-second Street," or the "Thorley's," in which light and color are diffused with too lavish a hand. The result is disunity, a rather spotty effect. But when he sees his subject as a mass and paints it in

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GREEN AND GOLD  
(From the painting by T. W. Dewing, in the Montross collection)

a few bold, pure tones the result is charming enough to make this little one-man show a fit rival to the display, further downtown, of the Water Color Society. The most poignant example is "The Coal Wagon." It was something like a tour de force to turn this prosaic theme into such effective pictorial terms. But the best measure of Mr. Beaulieu's talent is given in landscapes like the "Autumn Day" and the green "Moonlight" and the vivid "Snow and Water," or in architectural subjects like the "Fountain, Riverside Drive," the "Park Gates" and the "Old St. Paul's." This artist has an uncommon good grasp upon textures. His sketches of buildings denote an architect's sense of structure and material. The fountain piece aforesaid is a beautiful illustration of the point. The "Old New York" is another, and a charming portrait of a place into the bargain. For place, indeed, Mr. Beaulieu has a flair. One great merit of his exhibition is that apart from its technical merit it is genuinely interesting in its impressions of urban scenes, of the countryside, of still life, of a wide range of picturesque subjects.

The success of the Macbeth gallery in holding a little Academy of its own is repeated in the current show of thirty pictures by fifteen American artists. Landscape predominates, but the figure has its chance. Mr. F. Luis Mora holds the place of honor with his "Fortune Teller," a picturesque incident of the marketplace at Madrid. It is a Salon type of picture, big, telling, in the histrionic realism of the racy Spanish figures. Painted a number of years ago, its rather powerful colors have mellowed, and it is really a handsomer canvas than the same artist's decorative "Ruth in Costume." Mr. Maurice Fromkes, brilliant in decoration and in richness of surface, sends two portraits. Mr. Hawthorne's "Autumn" and "April" are both illustrations of a kind of symbolism which

is peculiarly his own—he attracts by technical ability, but wins us especially through subtlety of expression. Mr. Ivan Olinsky and Mr. Richard E. Miller are all for a purely decorative elegance, the former dealing in restrained tones, the latter painting his pretty figures in a gayer scheme of light and color. The landscapes make a beguiling array, embracing the opulent, rather intricate, harmonies of Mr. Charles H. Davis, the penetrating and beautiful impressions of spring and winter by Mr. W. L. Metcalf, examples early and late of Mr. Childe Hassam's luminous impressionism, poetized scenes by Mr. D. W. Tryon, forcible snow pictures by Mr. Gardner Symons and divers other pieces. The show is small, but full of interest.

Until March 1 there will be on exhibition at the Salmagundi Club a group of sculptures by Massey Rhind and paintings by E. Irving Couse, Glenn Newell, Ivan G. Olinsky, Edmond W. Greacen, H. Giles and H. F. Waltman. Mr. Newell paints cows in pasture with much understanding of his subject, and in "Clear and Cold," especially, he achieves a charming crisp quality which is very refreshing. A few of the canvases by Irving Couse have been seen before, but they do not lose by repetition. Massey Rhind shows seven sculptures, mostly portraits. They are well handled and masterful after a fashion. Among the busts are "Robert Van Idersstein, Esq.," "Joseph S. Isidor, Esq.," "Ex-President William H. Taft" and "C. W. Feigenspan." H. F. Waltman shows several portraits, cleverly and spontaneously handled. "Holidays," by Howard Giles, is a sketchy, scrappy bit of painting with a happy color scheme, and "On the Beach," by Greacen, is a contrast in handling, but also is charming in color.

A group of water color and oil paintings by Carlton Fowler has been placed on exhibition at the City Club, of New York. Most of the water

## Calendar of Exhibitions

American Art Galleries, Madison Square South—Tapestries, furniture and embellishments sold by order of the late Augustus Kountze, to March 1.  
American paintings, collected by N. E. Montross, to February 27; the contents of a Washington residence, to February 26.  
Anderson Galleries, Park Avenue at Fifty-ninth Street—British official war paintings, to February 26; from February 24, a collection of early works on aeronautics and railroads.  
Arden Studios, 599 Fifth Avenue—Paintings by John G. Johansen, to March 17.  
Ardsley Studios, 110 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn—Japanese prints; paintings, to March 1.  
Art Salon, Majestic Hotel—Paintings, by Content Johnson, to March 6.  
Art Students' League, 215 West Fifty-seventh Street—Paintings, by Haley Lever, to March 8.  
Arlington Galleries, 247 Madison Avenue—Paintings, by American artists, to February 28.  
Babcock Galleries, 19 East Forty-ninth Street—Western genre paintings, to March 1.  
Bourgeois Galleries, 668 Fifth Avenue—Paintings and drawings, by Jenny Tofel, to March 1.  
City Club of New York, 55 West Forty-fourth Street—Paintings, by Carlton Fowler, to February 28.  
Cosmopolitan Club, 133 East Fortieth Street—Paintings, by Maurice Fromkes, to March 15.  
Daniel Galleries, 2 West Forty-seventh Street—Paintings, by Ernest Lawson, to March 15.  
D. B. Butler & Co., 601 Madison Avenue—Etchings and mezzotints in color, to March 1.  
Enrich Galleries, 707 Fifth Avenue—Lithographs and etchings, by Odion Redon, to March 12; early American portraits, to March 6.  
Ferragil Galleries, 24 East Forty-ninth Street—Works, by E. L. Redfield, through February.  
Fine Arts Building, 215 West Fifty-seventh Street—National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors, to March 4.  
Folsom Galleries, 560 Fifth Avenue—Paintings, by William MacGregor Paxton, to March 8.  
Knoodler Galleries, 556 Fifth Avenue—From February 24, paintings by Louis Kronberg, and Whistler lithographs.  
Milch Galleries, 108 West Fifty-seventh Street—Paintings, by Jerome Myers, to March 1.  
Macbeth Galleries, 450 Fifth Avenue—Thirty paintings, by fifteen artists, to March 8.  
Montross Galleries, 550 Fifth Avenue—Paintings, by Kenneth H. Miller, to March 8.  
MacDowell Club, 108 West Fifty-fifth Street—Group of paintings, to March 2.  
National Arts Club, 19 East Nineteenth Street—American Watercolor Society, to February 28.  
Reinhardt Galleries, 565 Fifth Avenue—Water-colors, by William Jean Beaulieu, to March 1.  
Salmagundi Club, 47 Fifth Avenue—Paintings and sculpture, to March 1.  
Whitney Studio Club, 147 West Fourth Street—Wood engravings, monotypes, charcoal drawings and color plates, by a group of artists, to February 27.  
Whitney Studios, 8 West Eighth Street—From February 25, sculpture, by Malvina Hoffman, and paintings, by Arthur Christy, to March 15.  
Vanity Fair Shop, 718 Madison Avenue—Sanguine portraits, by Virginia Hargraves Wood, to March 5.

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colors have already been shown at the artists' recent exhibition in the Art Salon of the Hotel Majestic. Mr. Fowler is quite as successful in oils as in water colors, and in "The Forge in the Forest" he shows an effective composition of tall trees, with a group of small figures at their base. "The End of Summer" has brilliant color, but is a trifle hard in quality. In "The Mill Race," however, he achieves a charming, softened quality of sunshine and shadow. "Morning Mists, Tynningham Valley," has also been painted in a poetic mood, and "Willows, Lenox," though sketchily painted, has much spontaneity. The exhibition will last throughout the month. Ladies are admitted between the hours of 11 and 4 only.

(Impressions of other exhibitions on page four of this section.)

**\$100 Prize Is Offered to Artists by N. Y. Publishers**  
A \$100 prize has been offered to artists and designers by Boni & Liveright, publishers, 105 West Fortieth Street, for the best design for a lining paper for their volumes in the "Modern Library" which should express the idea and scope of the publications. The conditions of the competition are that the designs submitted must be 6 1/2 x 8 1/4, or in proportion and to be made in two colors, one indicating stock and the other the printing. All designs must reach the office of the publishers on or before March 5. The judges are J. Herbert Duckworth, Louis J. Bouché and Horace Liveright.

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